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LYRICS

J. HOUSTON MIFFLIN

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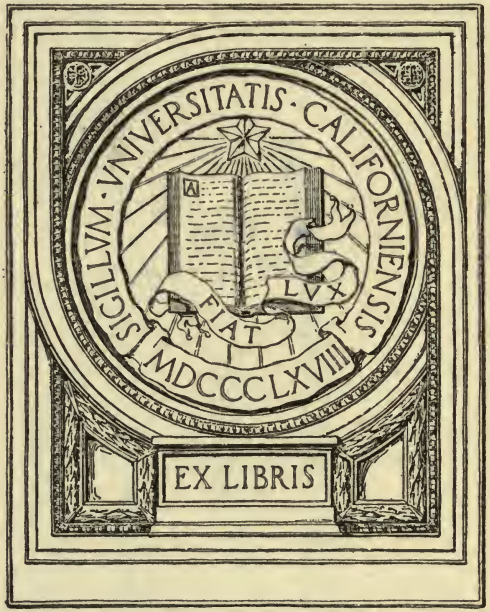

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LYRICS

By

J. Houston Mifflin

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LYRICS

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TO THE READER

(FROM THE ORIGINAL EDITION)

THIS little volume is not published, but is presented to the friends of the author as a slight memento of kind feeling, which he is confident will be reciprocated by indulgent criticism.

Some of the verses in this collection have appeared in print before, in Souvenirs or in Magazines; most of them, however, are the "lays of his boyhood," and recall to the writer the moments of idleness which they so pleasantly, if not profitably, employed.

J. H. M.

PHILADELPHIA,
Oct. 1st, 1835.

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PREFACE

J. Houston Mifflin, the author of these Lyrics, was born in 1807 and died in his eighty-second year. He was descended on the paternal side from Friends who came from Wiltshire, England, in 1679, and settled upon ground now included in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia.

Mr. Mifflin was educated at the Friends' Westtown Academy, and then entered, as a student, the Pennsylvania Academy of The Fine Arts, and afterwards pursued his study of art in Europe in conjunction with the American artists, Healy, Fraser, and DeVeaux.

Returning to America in 1837 Mr. Mifflin painted portraits for some years, chiefly in the cities of the South Atlantic States, where most of his works remain. He married in the North in 1844, but the great delicacy of his wife's health —which increased rather than diminished during all of her subsequent life—caused him to relinquish his profession in order to devote himself entirely to her welfare and that of their children.

Thus suddenly ended, when it had really but begun, his career as a portrait painter. Of this abandonment of all his cherished dreams of success—of this silent tragedy, for tragedy it was—Mr. Mifflin never spoke, but doubtless he made the sacrifice gladly.

Thus the author of these poems, who might have contributed his share to the portraiture of his day, was debarred in his prime from that distinction, and passed the remaining two score years of his life in the unartistic precincts of a country town. A town, however, which was not unappreciative of his qualities of mind and heart; of that there was always touching evidence in the genuine regard paid him on every hand.

Mr. Mifflin's character was quite unique in its contrariety of elements. To that courtliness of a gentleman of the old school—the distinguished bearing, and the polished politeness to women—he added at times in his intercourse with men, fiery outbursts of indignation and vehement denunciation, to be followed, perhaps, by a manner that was almost feminine in its winsomeness, yet which was without a trace of effeminacy.

Though Mr. Mifflin lived for more than fifty years after the publication of this his first volume, he wrote no more verse ; indeed he never referred to his own poems. He was too great a lover of the best in literature to overrate the productions of his youth ; and he remained through life a devotee—a passionate lover of poetry. His mind was filled with the creations of the masters, and he delighted till the end in his Shakespeare ; at eighty declaiming with enthusiasm the fine passages that he loved.

E. S. B.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.,
May, 1900.

TO THE SPIRIT OF POESY

Spirit serene, that ever com'st to me
With soul-refreshing, purifying power,
Teach me the language I may speak to thee,
Here in the holy hush of evening's hour.
Then let me tell how once I burned to grace
Thy forehead with some lyric trophy meet,
And now regret that I can only place
A garland so unworthy at thy feet!

"FAR I WANDER"

SONG

I

FAR I wander, maiden, yet
Be it e'er so far,
Never shall my heart forget
Thee and thy guitar.
Was the ear delighted most
By that voice of thine,
Or the eye by all the boast
Of thy charms divine?
If we listened to thy strain,
Eyes refused to see,

And to hear it was in vain,
If we looked at thee!

II

On the sunny hills of Spain,
In Italia's clime,
Still shall music's sweet refrain
Bring me back the time,
When thy voice within my heart
Such an echo found,
It has now become a part
Of all lovely sound!
Far I wander, maiden, yet
Be it e'er so far,
I'll remember and regret
Thee and thy guitar.

"THO' ON SAVANNAH'S SUNNY SHORE"

SONG

I

THO' on Savannah's sunny shore
An earlier flower may blow,
And nature here her vernal store
With richer hand bestow;
The stranger by your glancing stream
With pensive step may roam,
Yet dearer far that river deem
That freezes near his home.

II

In vain your rich luxuriant groves
May breathe the blandest air
That filled with fragrance idly roves

And wantons everywhere ;—
In vain your sweet melodious bird
Its soul in song may pour,—
Yet by the stranger is preferred
His wind-swept forest's roar.

III

But not in vain the glorious eyes
That light your southern clime,
And brighter than your sunny skies,
Make ever summer-time !
And not in vain the kindly hearts
That welcome those who roam ;
From these with pangs the stranger parts
As from a native home !

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA,
April, 1835.

THE TWILIGHT WALK

Not in the lighted halls of social mirth,
Nor 'mid the splendours of rejoicing day,
But in the sweetest solitude of earth,—
In the cool quiet of the evening's ray

Thou com'st to me, sweet Spirit! like the dew
Descending softly on the fainting flower,
With heaven-refreshing influence to renew
The withered feelings of a happier hour.

Then, all forgetful of a sordid race,
And from my baser self awhile set free,

The paths of purest pleasure I retrace
And wander near an angel's side—by thee.

If I forget thee in the haunts of men,
And to their soulless aims my thoughts resign,
In the dim gloaming come to me again,
And lead me gently to that world of thine!

"I PASSED ONE GORGEOUS EVENING"

I passed one gorgeous evening
As day began to pale,—
Beside a woodland lakelet
Within a lonely vale.

Its shores were fringed with willows,
And many a flower was seen
Above the placid mirror
That showed the sky serene;

How often since I left it,
That quiet little lake
Has heard the storm above it
In peals of thunder break;

"I PASSED ONE GORGEOUS EVENING"

The summer flower has vanished,
  The willows lost their glow,
In ice has winter bound it
  And prisoned it in snow.

But through the changing seasons,
  In bright or cloudy day,
To me a lake of summer
  It evermore will stay :

And once in gladsome boyhood
  I knew a careless child
With rosy cheek and gentle heart,—
  How joyous and how wild !

How often since that moment
  Her voice has rung with glee,—

How lovely is her beauty
  May not be sung by me!

In sunshine or in shadow
  Her pathway may have passed;
I only see the maiden
  Who bounded by me last.

"NAY, WARN ME NOT"

Nay, warn me not of witching eyes
With looks that fascinate the while,
Nor, smiling, tell what danger lies
In half so dangerous a smile!

Thy warbling lips but vainly seek
The rousèd passion to control,
When every syllable they speak
Is madness to the burning soul!

Thus haply may the siren sing
The dangers of her dreadful rock,
In melody too sure to bring
The listening mariner to the shock.

Too late the warning note to heed
When once within the vortex tossed:
Who ventures near thee—Heaven speed!
His hearing or his heart is lost!

FOREBODINGS

FAIREST! I fear that years of vain regret
For these neglected hours are stored for me,
When I shall deeply mourn that e'er I met,
Or meeting, then could ever part from thee.

When I shall wander far in other climes
And gaze on eyes almost as bright as thine,
And hear sweet voices that shall bring these times
But not their freshness, to this soul of mine:

How humbled then, in bitterness of heart,
For one dear hour like this, would I forego

The range of nature and the love of art,—
All wealth can give, or fame herself bestow!

When gasping faint, where mighty minds respired,
Faltering, where genius once triumphant trode,—
The dust still hallowed, and the air yet fired,
As round their god-like visitants it glowed,—

How shall my long-desponding heart despair,
And turn from trophies that can ne'er be mine;
And, when thy life it is too late to share,
Long for the quiet of a grave near thine.

TO MARIAN

WHO FOREBODED A DECAY OF FEELING

Shall Spring again her glories shower
  Profusely on the laughing earth,
And I not feel for mead or flower
  A genial sympathy of mirth?

Shall all the groves their gladness pour,
  The skies in all their splendour blaze,
And I exult to hear no more,—
  Nor longer kindle as I gaze?

And, Marian, shall thy radiant form
  Float beauteously before my view,

And I not feel my bosom warm,
  And worship then, as now I do?

Thy smile will fade, thou dar'st to say,
  And e'en thine eye no more be bright,—
Oh, long before that dismal day,
  Death! darken all my days in night!

THE SOLACE OF NATURE

I dolci colli ov' io lasciai me stesso.—PETRARCA

I

If in strange cities thou shouldst wander lone,—
A lost intruder in a crowded street,
Whom none may care for, and who cares for none,
Since there no form familiar he may greet,
No heart in unison with his to beat,—
And thou art sad, as memory retraces
Sweet distant scenes—than ever, now, more sweet,—
And the fond look of well-remembered faces
Which gave the dearest charm that hallowed those loved places:

II

Then, if thy heart revolting with disdain
Spurns at the low pursuits of half mankind,
And flies communion, lest its sordid chain
Within their prison should thy spirit bind—
Turn from the market-place of men, and find
In the fair fields, the solace that forever
Flows with renewing freshness for the mind—
A fountain gushing from the glorious giver—
Bright stream! a soul-restoring and triumphant river!

III

Rush to the hills and from their heights survey
The face of nature, still serenely fair!
She smiles upon thee as in childhood's day,
When thou wast smiling—for thou knew'st no care—

Far other look thine altered brow may wear,
Yet hers is still the same, and still her voice
Breathes its familiar notes upon the air,
As when her groves melodious were thy choice,
And bade thee fervently, as now they do, rejoice.

IV

Rejoice! with silver step the laughing stream
To its own music dances on its way;
The grain-field glitters in the summer beam,
While breezes o'er its golden ocean play;
The birds bid welcome with mellifluous lay;
The groves invite thee to their shadowy deep—
Here by the flow'ring pathway mayst thou stray,

Or climb the rock and lofty mountain-steep,
And there, on high, thy solitary commune
keep.

V

Rejoice that such a lovely world is given,
So full of beauty, to delight thine eye.
But more rejoice thee that indulgent Heaven
Bestowed a soul its beauty to descry—
Reflecting all the joy of earth and sky!
Thy cheek upon her breast—secure from
harms—
The world's indifference thou canst all defy.
Child of her heart! adorer of her charms!
Nature receives thee with a parent's open
arms!

TO A LADY

ABOUT TO SIT FOR HER PORTRAIT

I

Oh, do not mock the pencil's power,
  Nor bid the artist feebly trace
  An image of ethereal grace,
  A shade of thy celestial face,
Still varying—lovelier every hour!

II

Deep in the holy haunted cell
  Of poet's thought, and painter's mind,
  From vulgar gaze forever shrined,
  Beings that leave the day behind,
In soft mysterious twilight dwell.

III

Their beauty language fails to catch,
Their forms, that float like clouds in heaven
Or play as waves in tints of even
O'er pebbly shores by breezes driven,
No pencilled hues nor shapes can match!

THE STORM

Swift to the topmost crag I sped,
And felt the rain beat on my head ;
The thunder bellowed through the sky,
And lightning flashed incessant by ;
The clouds that canopied the heaven
Seemed by the dreadful uproar riven,
And through the transient chasm showed
The glory that behind them glowed,
As tho' the God of storms were there,
And his attending angels were
Enrobed in drapery of night,
And armed with lightnings and with might.
Upon the rock I sat, and hoped

Some fatal arrow, error-sloped,
Might glance from off its cloudy targe
And free my spirit of its charge.
I thought at last that thus my soul
Would speedier find its wished-for goal;
Loosed in the midst of storms, it might
Take to itself the shaft of light,—
For it a bright ethereal wing,—
At once to realms above to spring!
Vain was the wish! The flash went by;
Death hovered near me in the sky,
But on my heart he would not fling
The awful shadow of his wing.

COLUMBIA, PA.,
1824.

TO A PORTRAIT

OF BEATRICE CENCI

Wast thou a being of an earth-born race,
  Or but descended from some radiant sphere,
When Guido saw the seraph in thy face
  And gave thee to the world, unchanging,
    here?
If thou wast mortal—and we know thy lot
Was one of sorrow in this sorrowing spot—
  His touch translated thee, and thou wast
    caught
Up to the heaven of genius in the glow
  Of thy celestial beauty, with the thought
Of angels throned upon thy tranquil brow,

And woman's tenderness within thine eyes,
All sorrow pitying, but all pain above ;
We claim for earth, yet know thee of the skies,
And while we worship can not help but love !

THE WILD SWAN

I saw on the breast of a beautiful river
That reflected the green of the hill,—
While scarce to the sunbeam it gave a slight quiver,
For the breath of the morning was still,—
A bird, with a breast than the drifted snow whiter,
Serenely and silently glide,
And give to the waters an image still brighter,—
Seeming Peace upon Pleasure's fair tide.
Still on, like the Solitude's spirit it glided,
When, a stranger intruding too near,

Uprising, its wings the light ether divided,
Far away from all shadow of fear!
Oh, happy the soul that reposes so lightly
On the bosom of temporal things;
At danger's approach it can soar away brightly,
Above, on ethereal wings!

COLUMBIA, PA.,
6 mo. 1828.

TO A MAJESTIC TREE

Alla dolce ombra de le belle frondi

I

Tall tree ! thou hast given a pleasant shade
For many a warm and weary hour
To the lowly roof and the cottage bower,
And oft at eve thou hast whispered o'er
The laborer resting beside his door:
Now cottage and laborer low are laid
And yet thou dost not fade.

II

Oh, many an eve, o'er the smooth green plain,
Have the rustic girl and the village boy
Danced with the airy steps of joy,

While thy leafy limbs have o'er them swung
As their song, or louder laughter, rung:
No trace of the revel or song remain,—
Thy leaves will dance again.

III

Lofty and lonely thou meet'st the sky,
A towering shade and a mark from afar
To the traveller, like a landward star
Leading him on in his pathless way;
A shelter, too, on a stormy day:
The travellers sleep that have passed thee by,—
Thou standest, still, on high.

COLUMBIA, PA.,
1824.

A MEMORY

SONG

I

I love the flowers, I love the flowers,
They sweetly breathe to me
The fragrance of deserted bowers
I never more may see.
I love the flowers, I love the flowers,
For oh, my heart perceives
The color of its happiest hours
Reflected on their leaves!

II

I love the flowers, I love the flowers,
Thus falling to decay,—

Too like that cherished one of ours
Already passed away.
Their fleeting tints and fragrance bring
Fit emblem of her doom;
For when was passed her day of Spring
She faded in her bloom.

"OH, WAS IT IN A LAND OF DREAMS"

We met—we never met before,
And yet thine eyes were known to me;
And often mine have rambled o'er
Charms that belong, alone, to thee.

It was not in my native clime
I could have seen thy fairy form,
For thou hast grown, since childhood's time,
Among thy flowery valleys warm.

Oh, was it in some land of dreams
I wandered with a nymph like thee—
The fairest—where ambrosial streams,
O'er sapphires rolling, sparkle free?

Or, was it in some former sphere,
  Long since, my errant spirit met
Those beauties, that to venture near
  Is never—never to forget?

In some sweet planet, long forgot,
  I loved thee well, I dare engage;
And in another star, a spot
  We'll find for love some future age!

THE NAMELESS STAR

I asked a Sage with hoary hair,
With sunken cheek and hollow eye,—
Who scanned within the midnight air
The courses of the stars on high,—

Why watched he thus the weary night
And studied through the live-long day?
What guerdon bright had he in sight
For wasting thus his frame away?

He showed the volumes round him strown
Where he the planets had enrolled;

The comet's wandering path was shown,
And signs and changes were foretold.

"These—these shall bring, in after time,
My ample recompense in fame!". . .
I pointed to the blue sublime,—
"Yon little star,—what is its name?"

"That?—'t is a small, inferior light
Which twinkles by yon lustrous sphere;
Men know that distant planet bright,—
The other is not charted here."

And is it so? and has a world
For ages rolled its radiant car,

Night after night its flame unfurled,
And is it still—a nameless star?

Yet man, who shines one little night,
Would hear from every lip his name,
Dazzle the present with his light,
And fill the future with his fame!

THE EARLY DEAD

I

Blest the dead, the early dead!
Tears for them shall not be shed:—
Mercy gives a gentle doom,
Leads them to the sheltering tomb,
While the sky of life is bright,
Ere the coming of the night:
Those that linger long, shall know
Storm and darkness, cold and snow;
But secure in peaceful rest,
Lie the early dead—the blest!

II

From the spring-time fields they fled,
Ere one glossy leaf was shed;

While the bee was on the flower,
While the bird sang in the bower;
Fragrance floating all around,
Mingled with delicious sound:—
Slow we see them pass away,
And should mourn not their decay.
Birds shall sing, and roses bloom
O'er the early, envied tomb!

III

Gone! with buoyant hearts and young,
But to tones of rapture strung!
Ere the jarring notes of care
Mingled discord with despair.
They shall feel no powers decline,
See nor strength nor beauty pine;

Know not friends to death depart;
Never mourn for treachery's smart—
Happy dead!—escaped from pain,
All must feel who yet remain!

IV

Better than the best of life
Is a respite from its strife.
Those who live shall sigh for death,
Draw in pain their lingering breath;
But no pang shall ever grieve
Sleep of theirs—too sweet to leave!
When the morn of life is o'er,
Life has only death in store;
Joy for those, and triumph high,—
Blessèd dead, who early die!

LOST HOURS

Oh! what shall recompense for years
  Forever lost ere thou wast known?
For long contending hopes and fears,
  A life of weariness alone?

A captive slave in dungeon-night
  I lay till I was found by thee;
Thy look first blest my soul with light,
  Thy voice first brought me ecstasy!

Life was not life till thou didst give
  A charm to all the chains I wore,
And taught me then the hope to live,
  Whose only hope was death before!

Like one who walks with soul athirst,
At noon o'er Afric's burning waste,
Unconscious near the fountain-burst
Whose freshness he would die to taste,

I passed thee long unheeded by,
Nor knew till late that thou for me
Didst life for lingering death supply,
And make it rapture but to be!

THE WOODLAND WALK

"Oh, whither will it lead us, love,—
  The way through this sequestered glade?"
The clouds were gold the hills above;
  The breeze through wavering branches played;

And on we walked, still sure to choose
  The loveliest path, when pathways crossed,—
Though that appeared too plain to lose,
  And this too lovely to be lost.

"Oh, swiftly sinks the summer sun,—
  Where will our devious wanderings lead?"
But my love's way and mine were one,
  Its course how little did I heed!

Sweet sang the bird; the evening calm
O'er fragrant flowers, soft-breathing, stole;
But his dear lips had richer balm
And sweeter music to my soul!

Night lowered on our lonely path,
The woodland now grew dark and drear,
The storm came down with dreadful wrath,
Yet what cared I?—my love was near!

"Ah, beat, thou storm!" I softly cried,
"And strike, thou lightning, with thy dart!"
For in that hour I could have died
With rapture, on my lover's heart.

REVISITED

I linger in this lonely glen
  Where, Mary, last I strayed with thee,
And walk the spot I worshipped then—
  Why seems it not so bright to me?

The blossom breathes as sweet perfume,
  The blackbird now as blithely sings,
The wild-rose bears as rich a bloom,
  As glad the glittering torrent springs:

Thy voice was sweeter than the bird
  So wildly warbling in the tree;
And must his melody be heard
  When I no more may list to thee?

Thy cheek was brighter than the rose
  Which golden summers make to bloom;
And shall I mark its leaves unclose
  When thou art folded in the tomb!

The torrent with a freer leap
  Than thine sprang not upon its track;
Unfettered this its course will keep—
  But what will bring thy footsteps back?

Thy bounding form of sylph-like grace,
  A laugh,—how musically wild!
An angel intellect of face—
  Seraphic, and serenely mild:

All these entranced me, Mary, when,
  As being of a brighter birth,

Thy presence gave this lovely glen
The glow of Heaven upon the earth.

As bright to all the world but me,
Will still be this romantic spot;
But how can all this beauty be,
When, sweetest Mary, thou art not!

IN YOUTH

When on the Susquehanna's side
I roamed a free and venturous boy,
I sang her scenes with patriot pride,
My lyre was then my hope and joy.
I had no other thought of fame
Than that which wreathes a poet's name;
And tho' my song but little showed
The fervour in my heart that glowed,
I *felt* at least a poet's flame.

* * *. * * *

A playful fancy still her nest
Built in the lowly bower, my breast;
And thence she sprang, on airy wing,—
For home so dark, how bright a thing!

She watched the changes nature gave,—
A wreathing cloud, a curling wave,
A setting sun, a drooping flower;
Thus musing many a pensive hour,
She found in every changing mood
To life and fate, similitude.

1824.

THE CONJUNCTION OF TWO PLANETS

Mark, Marian, yonder glorious star
That blazes in the western sky,
And then that golden orb, afar,
That claims no less the wondering eye;

But late twin children of the night,
They roamed in beauty, side by side,
Out-dazzling every other light,
Themselves the firmamental pride.

For years in their empyreal race
Their paths approached—an hour were one—
Then crossed, and through the fields of space
Must ever farther widening run:

Full well we know, who, e'en as they,
More near and dear for years became,
Whose steps have parted, and who may
No longer know a path the same!

DEATH

What is it then to die? Oh, die we never
Before Death strikes us down into the tomb?
The easiest end we meet is when for ever
We leave life's darkness for the softer gloom
Of that earth-walled, grass-draperied little room
Where sorrow comes not. But to live and know
The loss of all the heart holds dear below,
To see them meet th' inevitable doom,—
This is the death in life—the bitterest woe!

COLUMBIA, PA.,
1824.

ON PRESENTING A ROSE

For thee I placed upon my breast
  This rose that with the morning blushed;
Too closely to my bosom pressed
  Behold it,—drooping, faded, crushed.

Ah, heaven forbid! thou fairer flower,
  Thy fate in this should imaged be,—
To wither in an evil hour
  Upon the breast should shelter thee!

No—no, these faded rose-leaves give
  An emblem of my heart more true,—
Whose swelling hopes have ceased to live—
  And paled, long since, its sanguine hue.

Then dash away the drooping thing
That we no more its blight may see;
And this crushed heart far from thee fling,
For it is all unworthy thee!

TO A MINIATURE

THE CASE OF WHICH HAD BEEN INDENTED BY A DAGGER

Fair image of the fairest face,
Worn nearest to thy lover's heart,
'Twas thine to guard thy resting place
And turn aside the assassin's dart.

Thy truer image—thy pure life—
Has thus preserved a changeless faith
Thro' many a scene of calm and strife,
And dangers deadlier far than death:

For what could touch with mortal harm
The heart that wore thee as its charm!

"WHENE'ER I THINK HOW BRIEF THE TIME"

SONG

Whene'er I think how brief the time
  Or I must hasten far from thee,
No more, perhaps, thy sunny clime,
  No more thy sunnier eyes to see;

I almost wish my colder home
  Had fettered still my wandering feet,
Nor left me liberty to roam,
  Captivity abroad to meet.

Since I have met thee but to leave,
  Have known thee only to regret,

Rejoiced beside thee—but to grieve,
And all but wish we ne'er had met,—

Far better thus I deem my fate—
Absent forever now, to be;
Than here to live all desolate,
Without the hope of meeting thee!

ATHENS, GA.

"I THINK OF THEE"

SONG

I think of thee, I think of thee,
When in the east the day-spring flushes,
For still thy presence is to me
As to the night the morning's blushes.

I think of thee, I think of thee,
When western skies are faintly shining,
For in the fading tints I see
My life, without thy smile, declining!

TO A LADY SINGING

SONG

I

Oh, let me gaze, for I forget
  When I behold those heavenly eyes,
That I am but a mortal yet,
  And thou art absent from the skies.
The radiance of a dreamed-of world
  Plays softly o'er thy face benign,
And glories but to sleep unfurled,
  Serenely on thy features shine.

II

Oh, sing again! for earth is passed,
  Its jarring notes unheeded roll,

Its cares are all at distance cast,
  And rapture, only, bathes the soul!
What tho' the past in sadness lower,
  What tho' the future darker be?
Nor past nor future now have power,—
  There is but heaven in hearing thee!

THE POET

The cloud that wreathes the setting sun
Is crimsoned when his light is done;
The heart that once is fired with song
Retains its lingering flushes long!

"I COULD HAVE BORNE"

I could have borne to hear thee sigh,
To mark the tear upon thy cheek;
The heart's bright tell-tale in thine eye
Of softer griefs would seem to speak.

And once I thought thine icy woes
Might melt themselves in tears away,
As streams, at winter midnight froze,
Will trickle at return of day.

The frequent sigh,—that wandering glance,—
The sudden start,—that anguished brow,
Told thou wast held in sorrow's trance,
Spoke much of pain,—but not till now,—

Not till thy sorrow-cheating smile
I saw, could I divine thy grief;
That said thy mirth was forced, the while
Thy heart was seared as Autumn's leaf.

Since feignèd joy reveals the more
Thy griefs, than e'en thy tears can do,
O let thy sorrows shade thee o'er,
But bring not smiles to prove them true!

THE RIVER

I

Wouldst thou mark the Susquehanna's course
Where 't is boldest and best to see?
Then come where it swells from its mountain source
And foams in its furious glee,
Then bounds away like a wild war-horse
In its strength exulting free!

II

When it sweeps with the wealth of its farthest shore
So grandly on to the deep;

Or rests awhile 'neath the glancing oar,
In the mountain shade to sleep;
Or lingers slow by the sycamore
Where the island birches weep.

III

Oh, come to the Susquehanna shades
Ere the balmy Spring goes by;
Ere the poplar's tulip-garden fades
From its breezy bed on high;
And mark the pool where the heron wades
And the summer-duck floats by!

IV

Where the breath of the clover fills the vale,
And the wild-grape scents the breeze,

Where the elder-blossom whitens the dale,
And the sweet birds in the trees,
With their wild-wood melody cannot fail
The rudest heart to please.

V

Thou shouldst come to the Susquehanna hills
Or her laurels lose their glow;
Where the placid pools of her mountain rills
Mirror their roseate snow;
Where the rock its crystal stream distils
On the moss and the fern below.

VI

Thou shouldst climb her cliffs to their proudest
peak

And glance o'er the River there,
Or the loftiest woodland summit seek,
And, spread in the azure air,
See forest, and field, and spire,—then speak—
Does the world hold aught more fair?

COLUMBIA, PA.,
6 mo. 1828.

"MY OWN FAMILIAR NAME"

I

Oh, call me by that name again,—
  My own familiar name!
To me more dear than all the vain
  Tho' honoured sounds of fame.
Far rather from affection's tongue
  Might it salute mine ear,
Than from the throats of thousands rung
  Their high triumphal cheer!

II

It brings me back a former day,—
  Ah, would I were the same!—
When those who shared my happy play
  Gave me no other name.

It brings the memory of an hour,
  But cannot bring to me
The glow of sunshine and of flower,
  The heart so light and free.

III

Man's cold respect I since have heard
  Enough my heart to chill;
But in that frank, familiar word
  There's tone of comfort still.
Then speak that friendly name again
  I knew when but a boy;
I hear it with a pleasant pain
  That's dearer far than joy!

REGRET

How gladly oft would we recall
Breath that has passed in idle words,
Escaped like liberated birds
We never can again enthrall!
And fewer still the lines we pen
We do not wish untraced again;
For let us write our songs in air,
Or trace our follies anywhere,
Soon all our pride in them is past
And we regret them at the last!

NOTE

The portrait from which the Frontispiece for this volume is taken, was painted in Paris, in 1837, by the Author's friend and fellow-student, James DeVeaux of South Carolina, who died in Rome in 1844, and lies buried near the resting place of Keats, and close to the grave of Shelley.

DeVeaux was made a member of the National Academy of Design in the Spring of 1844, but he died without a knowledge of the honor accorded him.

This portrait of J. Houston Mifflin is now in possession of his son, Mr. Lloyd Mifflin, to whom the Editor's acknowledgments are due for permission to reproduce it here.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.,
May, 1900.

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